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printer component with a printer having a carriage of claim 8, wherein said display surface has a unique shape, and further including a label displaying surface indicia thereon to indicate said required characteristic of the on-axis printer component and having said unique shape for being operably secured to said display surface.

10. (Previously Cancelled)

11. (Previously Amended) An inkjet printer comprising:

a chassis;

a motor;

a carriage operably secured to the chassis and driven by the motor for reciprocal movement relative to the chassis;

an on-axis ink reservoir secured to the carriage of the printer at a mounting portion, said on-axis ink reservoir having a unique pattern of tabs extending therefrom thereby indicating a characteristic of the ink received within the on-axis ink reservoir;

a printhead operably secured to the carriage, in fluid communication with said on-axis ink reservoir, and in electrical communication with a controller;

a discrete key element, operably secured to and separable from said mounting portion, said key element having a pattern of slots sized to receive the pattern of tabs extending from the ink reservoir, thereby allowing said ink reservoir to be operably secured to the mounting portion and preventing ink reservoirs having a different pattern of tabs from being operably secured to the first mounting portion.

12. (Previously Amended) The inkjet printer of claim 11, wherein said discrete key element is detachably secured to said mounting portion.

13. (Previously Amended) The inkjet printer of claim 11, wherein said discrete key element includes a unique slot for operably engaging a protrusion extending from said mounting portion, thereby allowing said discrete key to be secured to said mounting portion, and preventing key elements that are missing said unique slot from being secured to said mounting portion.

14. (Previously Amended) The inkjet printer of claim 11, wherein said discrete key element further includes a display surface displaying surface indicia thereon for visually indicating said characteristic of the ink received within the reservoir.

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15-20. (Previously Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Third Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33, wherein said key element prevents similarly shaped on-axis printer components that have a different key code thereon from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

23. (Previously Cancelled)

24. (Fourth Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33, wherein said defined key code is related to a desirable characteristic of said printer component and said key element includes surface indicia thereon to visually indicate the desirable characteristic of said printer component.

25. (Twice Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33, wherein said key element includes a mounting portion key element for operably engaging a mating key on said mounting portion.

26. (Twice Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 33, wherein said key element includes surface indicia thereon to visually indicate the required characteristic of said printer component.

27. (Twice Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 33, wherein said on-axis printer component is an ink reservoir.

28. (Twice Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 33, wherein said on-axis printer component is an ink/printhead cartridge.

29. (Cancelled)

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30. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printer component with a printer of claim 33, wherein said printer is an inkjet printer.

31. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis printer component with a printer having a carriage of claim 33, wherein said on-axis printer component is a printhead.

32. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis printer component with a printer having a carriage, the mechanism comprising:

a printer component mounting portion operably secured to the carriage of the printer;

a separate key element detachably secured to said on-axis printer component mounting portion, adjacent to said printer component;

at least one tab extending from the on-axis printer component, said at least one tab positioned and oriented in a defined and unique tab pattern thereby indicating a required characteristic of the on-axis printer component; and

said separate key element having at least one mating slot positioned and aligned to receive said at least one tab, thereby allowing the on-axis printer component to be operably secured to the on-axis printer mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printer components that have a different tab pattern from being operably secured to the printer component mounting portion.

33. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer having a carriage, said mechanism comprising:

an on-axis printer component mounting portion secured to the carriage of the printer;

a key element detachably secured to said on-axis printer component mounting portion, adjacent to said on-axis printer component, said key element operably engaging the key code of the printer component to allow the on-axis printer component with the defined key code to be operably secured to the on-axis printer component mounting portion.

34. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis

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printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33,
wherein said printer is an inkjet printer.

35. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis
printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33,
wherein said on-axis printer component is an ink reservoir.

36. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of an on-axis
printer component having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 33,
wherein said on-axis printer component is a printhead.

37. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead with a
printer comprising:

a printhead mounting portion operably secured to the printer;
a separate key element detachably secured to said printhead mounting portion,
adjacent to said printhead;

at least one tab extending from the printhead, said at least one tab positioned
and oriented in a defined and unique tab pattern thereby indicating a required
characteristic of the printhead; and

said separate key element having at least one mating slot positioned and
aligned to receive said at least one tab, thereby allowing the printhead to be operably
secured to the printhead mounting portion and preventing similarly shaped printheads
that have a different tab pattern from being operably secured to the printhead mounting
portion.

38. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead
with a printer of claim 37, wherein said printer is an inkjet printer.

39. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead
with a printer of claim 37, further including an on-axis ink reservoir in fluid
communication with said printhead.

40. (Amended) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead
with a printer of claim 37, wherein said separate key element includes surface indicia
thereon to visually indicate the desirable characteristic of said printhead.

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41. (Cancelled)

42. (Amended) A mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead having a defined key code thereon with a printer, said mechanism comprising:
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a printhead mounting portion secured to the printer;
a discrete key element detachably secured to the printer, adjacent to said printhead, said key element operably engaging the key code of the printer component to allow the printhead with the defined key code to be operably secured to the printhead mounting portion.

43. (Previously Added) The mechanism for establishing compatibility of a printhead having a defined key code thereon with a printer of claim 41, wherein said separate key element includes surface indicia thereon to visually indicate the desirable characteristic of said printhead.